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CONSUMER TIME

HIGH FENCES

NETWORK: NBC

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(Produced by the War Food Administration, this script is for reference only and may not be broadcast without special permission. The title CONSUMER TIME is restricted to network broadcast of the program...presented for more than eleven years in the interest of consumers.)

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1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE...MONEY IN TILL
2. JOHN: It's CONSUMER TIME!
3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER....CLOSE DRAWER.
4. ANNCR: During the next fifteen minutes, the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities available as a public service for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME by the War Food Administration.
5. SOUND: TRUCK...FADING IN...HOLD FAIRLY LOUD...THEN POLICEMAN WHISTLE LOUD INSISTANT SEVERAL TIMES...TRUCK COMES TO STOP WITH POLICEMAN SHOUTING OVER.
6. OFFICER: Pull over! Pull over!
7. DRIVER: (GRUMBLING) Aww...what's the matter now...
8. OFFICER: Look, bud, you know what the law is in this state?
9. DRIVER: Officer...I wasn't going over thirty. My truck isn't overweight.
10. OFFICER: (INTERRUPTING) No...no...
11. DRIVER: It's got six license plates on it...including one for this State...what could be the matter now?
12. OFFICER: Get out here and look at the side of this truck! See here.... you gotta paint on the side of your truck how much it weighs!
13. DRIVER: Yeah! So look there, Officer. There it is! Fifteen tons. Painted right there. What could be clearer'n that?

14. OFFICER: Sorry, bud...but the law in this State is you got to have it painted on in pounds, not tons.

15. DRIVER: Awww...now look, Officer, I've got a truck-load of perishable food here; I can't stop to repaint my truck!

16. OFFICER: T'ain't my law, friend...it's the law of the State. Get yourself a paint can and paint the weight on right. (PROJECTING)
Or I'll have to run you in.

17. DRIVER: (TO HIMSELF) Well, if that don't beat everything! I've been through five states with this load, and it seems like every fifteen minutes I get stopped for breaking another state regulation!

PAUSE:

18. JOHN: Yes, today on CONSUMER TIME, we are going to tell the story of a man who drives a truck. It's not his life story exactly, nor is it about his family...nor does he meet anyone like Lana Turner in this story. No...this fellow, you see, drives a big truck, maybe a trailer...loaded with food. Vegetables, perhaps, or fruit...or maybe it's a tank-truck full of milk.

19. FREYMAN: And he drives it where? He drives across the broad, beautiful expanse of the United States of America. He drives from one state to another...Through several states, perhaps, on his important mission...which is the transportation of food.

20. JOHN: Through several different states, he travels. And right there...there is the reason we are telling his story! Because believe it or not, this driver meets with some extraordinary difficulties in driving his important cargo from one state to the other.

21. FREYMAN: And why? Just listen. Around nearly every one of the forty-eight states, there are erected barriers...highway barriers, they're called...trade walls that halt and interrupt the free progress of interstate commerce.

22. JOHN: And because it is your story and mine...because it affects prices of food and other commodities...because these interstate highway barriers mean delays in deliveries...frequently means you may not get certain foods at all...that's why we're telling about them today.
23. FREYMAN: Let's go back to our friend on the highway. He's been stopped because he was disobeying the law of that particular state. True enough, the sign painted on his truck was just right for the state he'd just been through. But he's crossed the line, and in this state, he's breaking the law.
24. JOHN: More delay...while he does a repaint job. Holding up a load of perishable food...using precious time...
25. DRIVER: (TO HIMSELF) All right...that's done...let's get on, now. Had too many delays already. O.K. On the way....
26. SOUND: FADE IN ON ABOVE...TRUCK ROLLING. HOLD, AND THEN FADE UNDER.
27. DRIVER: Smooth sailing? For a while. Oh-oh! Wait a minute! Coming to another state line. Big sign...says "PORT OF ENTRY". Big fine if you don't stop...
28. SOUND: TRUCK UP, AND STOPS SLOWLY.
29. MAN: State line! State line, brother. Stop that truck...right here...right here.
30. MAN TWO: Drive up on these scales, Mack. Whoa, there! O.K. Back!
31. MAN: Let's see your license.
32. MAN TWO: Let's get that weight.
33. MAN: Ah-ah, Pal! You're too heavy for this state.
34. MAN TWO: Thirty-thousand pounds. You gotta unload. No more'n twenty-thousand on this road!

35. MAN: Let's get that length, now...
Let's see that height.
Made it by two inches. (DOUBTFULLY) So I guess you're all right.
36. MAN TWO: Hey there, fellow, we're not through with you.
Where's your license for this State?
37. DRIVER: Awww...I'm just driving through.
38. MAN TWO: That doesn't matter...you gotta pay a fine.
39. MAN: Gotta buy a license...
40. MAN TWO: Lay it on the line.
How about the taxes?
The tariff?
The fee?
41. MAN: Gotta pay inspection...
Here...pay me.
42. DRIVER: Now, look, fellows, I just went through all this in the last
state. And for one thing, my truck wasn't too heavy to go
through that state.
43. MAN TWO: That state's not this state. We got different laws! Begin
unloadin', bud. Get that weight down to 20,000...the right
amount for this state. You can send the rest of your load by
another truck.
44. MAN: What's he got in there?
45. MAN TWO: Oranges.
46. MAN: Oranges, he says!
47. DRIVER: Yes...and they're spoiling, too...I've been stopped so many
times.
48. MAN: Look, friend, we have to put you in quarantine. Might as well
take it easy for a while. The stuff's gotta be inspected.
49. DRIVER: Inspected? It's been inspected in every state I've been through!

50. MAN TWO: Sorry, Mack, that doesn't count with us. Here's the bill for the inspection. Inspector'll be around tomorrow.

51. DRIVER: Tomorrow! I can't wait until....

52. MAN: Sorry, friend, it's the law. Don't want to pay a fine, do you? Here, by the way, let's take a look at that gas guage...

53. DRIVER: Gas guage? Now what?

54. MAN: Yep, 15 gallons, it says there. Hey, Joe, write him out a bill. He's got to pay a gasoline tax on 15 gallons of gas.

55. DRIVER: Are you kiddin'? That's my gas. I already paid the tax on it where I bought it. Back in the other state.

56. MAN TWO: State law, here, Pal. Got to tax you for the gas in the tank. O.K.? (O.K.)

PAUSE:

57. FREYMAN: So far, this driver figures he's paid many dollars to go across these few states with his truckload of food. Of course all these laws don't apply in a single state. But when he drives across several state lines he finds he's paid fees for the weight of his truck...mileage taxes, insurance, something called gross receipts tax, a compensation fee, a fine because his truck was too long in one state...different charges...conflicting regulations.

58. JOHN: An expensive little trip. And expensive for you and me. Because if it costs all that much extra to haul food from state to state, we've got to pay more for it when it finally comes to us.

59. FREYMAN: Highway barriers...state trade walls! How does it happen that these free United States have fenced themselves off from each other...often treating each other as foreign countries...holding up the free course of interstate trade?

60. JOHN: One hundred and fifty-eight years ago...in 1787...the Constitutional Convention was called. One of the principal reasons it was called was to draft amendments to the Articles of Confederation that would eliminate trade barriers among the thirteen quarrelling states...barriers that were threatening to keep the country forever small and weak.

61. FREYMAN: So...it was written into the Constitution that there shall be free and uninterrupted trade between the states. Article 1, Section 10 reads...

62. VOICE: (FILTER) No state shall, without the consent of the Congress, lay any impost or duties on imports or exports, except what may be absolutely necessary (FADING) for executing its inspection laws and net produce of all....(OUT)

PAUSE:

63. JOHN: However...today...a century and a half later...we cannot say we have free trade between the states.

64. FREYMAN: Little by little, through the years...particularly in the depression years after 1929, we have tended more to buy products of our own state, to the exclusion of out-of-state goods. To keep competing products from coming in, many states have enforced strict regulations, and have charged high fees and taxes.

65. JOHN: Yes, little by little, these barriers grew between the states. At first they seemed harmless enough. But after a few years, we suddenly realized that these walls had reached such a height that they could no longer be scaled.

66. MAN: (NARRATIVE) Today, virtually every state in the Union has some form of trade barrier. There are well over a thousand of them on the statute books.

67. MAN TWO: (SAME STYLE) The result is bitterness, retaliation, boycotts, and border wars.

68. MAN: At a time when we are engaged in a war for the very preservation of liberty, there are guards on the borders of several of our states, ready with guns to enforce these internal barriers to trade between each other!

69. FREYMAN: But...how is this possible under the Constitution? That's what I want to know!

70. JOHN: (CONVERSATIONAL) Well, first, the Constitution does not say that states can't show preference for the food they grow at home.

71. MAN: So...forty-seven states today have laws limiting or making it impossible for certain products from other states to enter within their borders. Or taxing products so that it is impracticable to expect consumers to pay these added food costs.

72. FREYMAN: Yes...but what about tariffs. They're not allowed, you know.

73. JOHN: No, but a state is allowed to raise revenue. Nearly every state has erected a highway barrier by levying taxes and charging fees on trucks crossing their line.

74. MAN TWO: State line wars have been waged...when out-of-state truck drivers refused to buy a license tag just for a couple of trips into the state.

75. JOHN: Even laws for the safety, health, and the morals of the public have been altered and extended to form barriers to trade.

76. MAN: For instance...under these laws, a state can restrict the size and weight and length of a truck crossing its border...and these specifications are widely different in the different states!

77. JOHN: In one state, a truck which weighs more than 18,000 pounds cannot go across the line.

78. MAN: In another, a truck may weigh as much as 100,000.

79. MAN TWO: Actually, it is impossible even to build a truck that could legally and lawfully pass through every state in the U.S.A.
80. JOHN: Then take the agricultural quarantine laws. Vitally important to keep plant and animal diseases from spreading from state to state.
81. MAN TWO: But what has happened here! More barriers to trade have been set up under the disguise of quarantine laws.
82. MAN: For instance, many states will make state line inspections for certain foods so specific and so exact that no out-of-state product can meet it exactly. Thereby, they cleverly keep out agricultural products that will compete with home-grown ones.
83. FREYMAN: And as a result, I might not get the quality foods I'd probably have otherwise!
84. JOHN: You're right. Now here are some of the state laws on foods which directly affect you...the consumer. In one state....
85. MAN: (FILTER) Only milk that is inspected by our own inspectors is allowed to come into this state. However, we FORBID inspection of milk at all, except within the boundaries we designate.
86. JOHN: And in another state...
87. MAN TWO: (FILTER) Any milk coming into this state must be marketed exactly as we say, or else coloring matter will be added to it, to distinguish it from the rest!
88. JOHN: And again!
89. MAN: (FILTER) In our state, we prohibit any eggs from being shipped across our borders...unless they are marked SHIPPED EGGS...and have the name of their home state on the box.
90. FREYMAN: Oh goodness, that would mean I, as a shopper, would automatically think they're not as fresh as the ones from this state.
91. JOHN: Yes...so you'd buy the eggs from your state, when the others might be just as good, or even better! Listen to this law...

91A. MAN: TWO: (FILTER) Any farmer from another state who wants to sell his vegetables on our markets, must pay a fee of \$200.00, even though he's just across the state line.

91B. FREYMAN: And that would mean I'd have to pay much more for those vegetables on the market.

92. JOHN: Right. The taxes and fees on food and essential goods traveling in interstate commerce, add up to millions of dollars. Here's another food law...

93. MAN: Any bread that comes into this state from another state, must be weighed before it can be sold.

PAUSE:

94. JOHN: Wouldn't you say these states are treating each other as foreigners?

95. FREYMAN: I should say so.

96. JOHN: Well, finally, states get angry at each other. State Number One refuses to accept a product from State Number Two. So... State Number Two boycotts all products from the first state and so on.

97. MAN: (NARRATION) Yes, things got very bad, until the war. Then because these barriers were interfering with vital war shipments, the states relaxed some of their regulations; temporarily abolished some of their laws. But this is for the duration, and for the duration only...

98. MAN TWO: After the war, these trade walls, these highway barriers will rise up again.

99. FREYMAN: What's being done about it then? Has anything been done?

100. JOHN: Yes...the state Governments have realized for a long time the harm the barriers were doing both to the consumer, and to the prosperity of the states themselves.

101. MAN: A conference of state Governors and motor vehicle administrators was held, not long ago, and Governors of the various states determined to abolish the menace of trade barriers forever.
102. JOHN: Said the Governor of Missouri...
103. GOVERNOR: (STENTORIAN) We may well ask if this is the United States of America or the new-world version of the Balkan States.
104. JOHN: And the Governor of Indiana...
105. GOVERNOR: I predict...that there will emerge a new era of free trade among the states, which will result in an increasing prosperity, and a more perfect union.
106. JOHN: And the Governor of Arkansas...
107. GOVERNOR: I call upon the Council of State Governments to bring about simple obedience to the Constitution of the United States, by re-establishing free commercial intercourse among the states.
108. FREYMAN: And was this conference of Governors successful?
109. JOHN: Well, after the Conference met, several states slackened or permanently withdrew some of their most unfair regulations. Several more states turned down proposed laws that would have meant stiffer highway barriers.
110. MAN: There have been more state conferences since...and there will be more before the barriers are lifted...
111. FREYMAN: And meantime, what about our friend who drives the truck.
112. JOHN: He will continue to make his way, as best he can across the various state lines...through the ports of entry...paying his fees and fines...carrying his cargo of food.
113. SOUND: TRUCK...VERY LOW. FADE SLOWLY UP, BUT HOLD UNDER. START NEAR BEGINNING OF ABOVE SPEECH. AT END OF SPEECH, BRING UP AND THEN FADE DOWN AGAIN AND OUT.

114. INSPECTOR: (IN A KIND OF MONOTONY LIKE REPETITION OF FIRST THEME) Sorry, Mister, it's the law. Truck weighs too much. You got to dump out some of that milk or you can't go through this state.
115. DRIVER: But look, bud I got to keep this tank full of milk! If I take any out, what's left will splash around...and when I get where I'm going, it'll be nothin' but buttermilk!
116. INSPECTOR: (SAME MONOTONE) Sorry, Mister. State Law. Got to cut down on (SLOW FADE) your weight when you pass through this state.
Sorry, Mister...state law...(FADE OUT...SHORT PAUSE)
117. JOHN: Yes, interstate trade barriers will continue in this country. They will no doubt return full force after the war is over. How long they will continue, no one can tell.
118. MAN: But a new note in this chapter of American history was sounded only recently...when the President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt said these words:
119. MAN TWO: "Interstate trade barriers, if allowed to develop and multiply, will, however, constitute social and economic problems even more serious than international tariffs. It is a matter which demands the immediate attention of all the people of our country, and it is my earnest hope that the several states will take effective steps toward the removal of all barriers to the free flow of trade within our Nation."
120. FREYMAN: And that, CONSUMER TIME friends, is the story of trade barriers, in the United States today.
121. JOHN: Next week, March 17, is St. Patrick's day. And we're going to tell a story about superstitions in foods...some true ones, and some strange old beliefs that our forefathers had long, long ago.
122. FREYMAN: So be with us then, for another edition of...
123. SOUND: CASH REGISTER

124. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME!
125. SOUND: CASH REGISTER
126. JOHN: How your money buys a living in wartime!
127. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME, written by Christine Kempton, is presented by the War Food Administration through the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations. It comes to you from Washington, D. C. This broadcast period for CONSUMER TIME has been made available as a public service.

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